

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 5-11, 14-21, 24-27 and 30-32 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 10, 20 and 26 are amended by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings. Thus, no new matter is presented.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-2, 5-11, 14-21, 24-27 and 30-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hayes et al. (U.S. Pub. 2003/0200216, herein Hayes) in view of Sugiura (U.S. Pub. 2003/0028272).

In response to the above-noted rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claims 1, 10, 20 and 26 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Amended independent Claim 1 relates to an information service method. The method includes recording identification information unique to a non-recordable data recording medium to the data recording medium and correlatively storing the identification information and management information corresponding to the data recording medium at a management server. Then, after reading the identification information from the data recording medium when data is reproduced, the identification information is transmitted over a communication network to the management server which reads the management information correlated with the identification information. The management information is then provided and the content data is reproduced in accordance with the provided management information. Amended independent Claim 1 further recites,

... wherein the management information contains use limit information that represents a license of a user for content data recorded on the data recording medium, and

the use limit information contains at least one of *a reproduction expiration date and time, and a number of times the content data recorded on the data recording medium can be copied.*

Independent Claims 10, 20 and 26, while directed to alternative embodiments, are amended to recite substantially similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of independent Claims 1, 10, 20 and 26.

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 1-2, 5-11, 14-21, 24-27 and 30-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Hayes in view of Sugiura. The Official Action cites Hayes as disclosing the Applicants' invention with the exception of the use limit information containing at least one of the number of times the content data recording on the recording medium can be reproduced, the reproduction expiration date and time, and the number of times the content data recorded on the data recording medium can be copies. The Official Action cites Sugiura as disclosing this claimed feature and states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the cited references to arrive at Applicants' claims. Applicants respectfully that amended independent Claims 1, 10, 20 and 26 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Specifically, in rejecting the claimed features directed to the "use limit information," the Office Action relies on paragraph [0018] of Sugiura. This cited portion of Sugiura describes that when a reproduction key issuance request is transmitted from the terminal, the reproduction key issuing means recognizes the number of times a reproduction key corresponding to ID information included in the reproduction key issuance request has been issued to the terminal by referencing the recording means. The server then issues the reproduction key to the terminal when the number of times of issuances is less than a predetermined allowable number of times. Thus, Sugiura describes that a reproduction key

may be issued when the number of times the data is reproduced is less than a predetermined allowable number of times, thus limiting the number of times the content can be reproduced.

In contrast, amended independent Claim 1 recites that “the use limit information contains at least one of *a reproduction expiration date and time, and a number of times the content data recorded on the data recording medium can be copied.*” Sugiura, on the other hand, merely describes controlling the issuance of a reproduction key based on the number of times the reproduction key has previously been issued, but fails to teach or suggest limiting the use of content based on a reproduction expiration date and time or a number of times the content data can be copied, as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 1 (and the claims that depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn. For substantially similar reasons, it is also submitted that amended independent Claims 10, 20, and 26 (and the claims that depend therefrom) patentably define over Hayes and/or Sugiura.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-2, 5-11, 14-21, 24-27 and 30-32 is patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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